

July 1, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

NAMI North Carolina is part of the largest grassroots organization for people affected by mental illness. NAMI North Carolina expects recovery for people living with mental illness and aims to optimize the lives of people living with mental illness. Integrated healthcare is very important to our organization, as many people living with mental illness are affected by chronic diseases at a much higher rate than the general population. While reviewing North Carolina's 1115 waiver request, we hope you will consider the following:

1. Expand Medicaid for people with mental illness who are uninsured

A report from 2014 indicates that nearly 144,000 North Carolinians who would have qualified for Medicaid under expansion had a mental illness or substance use disorder. State funded mental health services managed by the LME/MCO are a precious commodity. By expanding Medicaid, not only will more North Carolinians receive access to critical mental health treatment, but our state will save money and state resources for those who fall in the coverage gap. Simply put, there must be a clear plan for vulnerable NC citizens to receive mental health care.

2. Hold Prepaid Health Plans (PHP) accountable for quality of life outcomes for their beneficiaries

People who live with chronic mental illness want the same things as everyone else: safe housing, meaningful work, and close relationships. Quality of life outcomes, including housing, work, healthy relationships, and community involvement, are often overlooked but essential for overall wellness. Quality of life outcomes are just as important as health outcomes, and Prepaid Health Outcomes should be held accountable to specified quality of life outcomes.

3. Develop an avenue for consumer and family input for Prepaid Health Plans (PHP)

A mechanism for *meaningful and continuous* consumer and family input should be implemented for continued improvement of services.

Thank you for taking time to read our comments. If you have questions, please contact Nicholle Karim at nkarim@naminc.org or 919-788-0801.